

Message Text

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21

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 OMB-01

AID-05 IGA-02 /075 W

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R 071055Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDE 4043

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 8221

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, EAID, IS

SUBJECT: ISRAELI AID REQUEST

1. MARGALIT, HAARETZ' CORRESPONDENT IN THE U.S., REPORTED ON DECEMBER 7 THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT WILL APPEAL A PROPOSED "CUT" IN ISRAELI AID FOR 1978. IN PLACE OF THE \$2.3 BILLION ISRAEL HAS REQUESTED, ADMINISTRATION'S PROPOSED BUDGET REPORTEDLY WILL INCLUDE ONLY \$1.4 TO \$1.6 BILLION FOR ISRAEL, OF WHICH A BILLION WILL BE FOR MILITARY AID. THE CUT REDUCTION WAS MADE ON THE BASIS OF AN ISRAELI ESTIMATE THAT THEIR BOP BEFICIT THIS YEAR WOULD DECREASE BY \$500 MILLION. THIS ESTIMATE, MARGALIT SAID, IS NO LONGER ACCEPTED IN ISRAEL BUT ELEMENTS IN THE ADMINISTRATION HAVE USED IT IN ORDER TO JUSTIFY THE CUT.

2. BLITZER, JERUSALEM POST CORRESPONDENT IN THE U.S., ALSO REPORTED ON DECEMBER 7. THAT PRESIDENT FORD'S FINAL DECISION ON FY 1978 AID TO ISRAEL IS VIRTUALLY CERTAIN TO BE FOR CONSIDERABLY LESS THAN ISRAEL HAS REQUESTED. HE SAID THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER IS PUSHING FOR \$1.8 BILLION IN ASSISTANCE (\$1 BILLION IN MILITARY AND \$800 MILLION IN ECONOMIC AID), WHILE OMB DIRECTOR LYNN IN CALLING FOR A FINAL AID FIGURE OF \$1.4 TO \$1.6 BILLION. ISRAELI OFFICIALS HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY REGARD THE \$2.3 BILLION FIGURE AS THE MINIMUM NECESSARY TO MEET ISRAEL'S NEEDS. THE PENTAGON, HOWEVER, ARGUES THAT ISRAEL CAN MANAGE WITH \$500 MILLION LESS IN MILITARY AID THAN REQUESTED.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY ASSISTANCE, FOREIGN ASSISTANCE APPROPRIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976TELAV08221
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760451-0705
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761264/aaaacdnm.tel
Line Count: 61
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: wolfsd
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 JUN 2004 by hattaycs>; APPROVED <06 AUG 2004 by wolfsd>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ISRAELI AID REQUEST
TAGS: PFOR, EAID, MASS, IS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006